

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claim 7 as follows:

1. (Original) A process for the preparation of a propylene carbonate, which process comprises contacting propylene oxide with carbon dioxide at a temperature of from 150 °C to 250 °C in the presence of a recycled tetraalkylphosphonium bromide catalyst of the formula $R^1R^2R^3R^4PBr$.

2. (Original) A process of claim 1, wherein a protogenic compound is present during the preparation of propylene carbonate.

3. (Original) The process of claim 1, wherein the protogenic compound is an alcohol.

4. (Original) The process of claim 1, wherein R^1 , R^2 , R^3 and R^4 represent identical alkyl groups.

5. (Original) The process of claim 1, wherein the amount of tetraalkyl phosphonium bromide compound is from 0.0001 to 0.1 mole per mole of propylene oxide.

6. (Original) The process of claim 1, wherein the preparation of propylene carbonate is conducted at a partial carbon dioxide pressure in the range of from 5 to 70×10^5 N/m².

7. (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of 1,2-propanediol, which process comprises:

(i) preparing a propylene carbonate as claimed in claim 1 ~~by a process comprising:~~

~~—contacting propylene oxide with carbon dioxide at a temperature of from 150 °C to 250 °C in the presence of a recycled tetraalkylphosphonium bromide catalyst of the formula $R^1R^2R^3R^4PBr$ to obtain a reaction mixture;~~

- (ii) contacting the reaction mixture containing the propylene carbonate with water and/or alcohol in the presence of a heterogeneous catalyst to obtain 1,2-propanediol and optionally dialkylcarbonate; and,
- (iii) separating the 1,2-propanediol and optionally dialkylcarbonate from the reaction mixture obtained.

8. (Original) The process of claim 7, wherein in step (ii) the propylene carbonate is contacted with water to obtain 1,2-propanediol.

9. (Original) The process of claim 7, wherein in step (iii) the tetraalkylphosphonium bromide catalyst is removed in combination with 1,2-propanediol, which catalyst and 1,2-propanediol are subsequently recycled to step (i).

10. (Original) The process of claim 7, wherein a protogenic compound is present during the preparation of propylene carbonate.

11. (Original) The process of claim 10, in which process the protogenic compound is an alcohol.

12. (Original) The process of claim 5, wherein R^1 , R^2 , R^3 and R^4 represent identical alkyl groups.

13. (Original) The process of claim 7, wherein the amount of tetraalkyl phosphonium bromide compound is from 0.0001 to 0.1 mole per mole of propylene oxide.

14. (Original) The process of claim 7, wherein the preparation of propylene carbonate is conducted at a partial carbon dioxide pressure in the range of from 5 to 70×10^5 N/m².